

Documentaries on Theatre

20-25 October 2014, 6.30pm

Vayala Cultural Center, Ayyanthole, Thrissur

20.10

Arna's Children (Palestine/2004)

Dir: Juliano Mer Khamis (84 min, Arabic/English/Hebrew with English Subtitle)

Arna Mer Khamis was a legendary activist against the Israeli Occupation. Arna founded an alternative education system for Palestinian children of Jenin refugee camp, whose lives had been disrupted by Israeli occupation. The children slowly grew to trust and to love Arna: "She's like my mother," says one child. "She helps us. She saved us from the streets." Arna's son, Juliano Mer Khamis, was a director at the theater group and filmed his mother and the children over a six year period. When Arna died of cancer in 1995, the theater group struggled to continue. Five years after Arna's death, Juliano, now one of the region's leading actors, returns to the camp to discover what happened to Arna's children. Shifting back and forth in time, Mer Khamis's film juxtaposes the sweet-faced young boys with the militants and martyrs they become. *Arna's Children* reveals the tragedy and horror of young lives trapped by the circumstances of war and occupation.

Juliano Mer Khamis

The Palestinian-Israeli actor Juliano Mer-Khamis (Born 1958), was a successful stage and screen performer, film-maker and activist, widely known for his work as the artistic director of the '*Freedom Theatre*' movement. Dedicated to equipping young Palestinians with the potent powers of art and self-expression, Juliano carved out a stage on which children could find their feet and voice. On April 4, 2011, Juliano was shot dead by a man in mask outside the premises of Freedom Theatre.

21.10

Parzifal in Isfahan (Germany/2003)

(Supported by Goethe Institut)

Dir: Bruno Schneider (33 min, German with Eng. Subtitle)

'Parzifal in Isfahan', a film by Bruno Schneider, reports a theater trip to Iran. In October 2003, the '*Theater im Marienbad*' (Freiburg, Germany) took an unusual trip to Iran. The lead role in 'Parzifal' (*Parzifal: meaning* disambiguation; *is Richard Wagner's controversial opera written in 1882*) was played by the famous German dramatist and writer Tancred Dorst. Parzifal was the first production of a Western theater company in Isfahan since the Islamic Revolution of 1979. Through travel pictures, theater scenes and interviews, the film adds the artistic, cultural and political facets of this unique theater trip. He tells of the theater belonging to the people and their incomparable hospitality.

21.10

Mayabazar (India/2006)

(Supported by India Foundation for the Arts)

Dir. K M Madhusudhanan (60mins, Telugu with Eng Subtitle)

'Mayabazar' is a documentary film on Surabhi Theatre, a rare institution of family groups that leads nomadic life by performing dramas in villages with a track record of more than 120 years. There was a time that Surabhi troupes could tremendously survived all over Andhra Pradesh. Sri Venkateswara Natyamandali (Surabhi) which is well known as the 'Surabhi Babji Troupe' is one of the survived till date, comprising about 65 family members in the group. The film, envisaged as a journey with the Surabhi, examines the everyday activities of these travelling actors and their families, rehearsals, exercises, the staging of the plays based on the epics and the *puranas*, the audience, sets, make-up and costume design. The film also explores the traces of Parsi theatre, silent cinema from the Phalke-era and the paintings of Raja Ravi Varma in the design of the theatre company's sets and costumes.

K.M. Madhusudhanan is an Indian film maker and artist. Born in Alappuzha, he started drawing at a very young age. After his preliminary education, studied painting in Fine Arts College, Thiruvananthapuram. Maker of several documentaries, and fiction films, Madhusudhanan's 'Self Portrait' (2001) has awarded Best Film at Thessaloniki Festival-Greece and 'Bioscope' (2008) won national and international awards including five State Awards in Kerala.

22.10

The Nine Months (India/2010)

(Supported by India Foundation for the Arts)

Dir. Merajur Rehman Baruah (77mins, Assamese with Eng Subtitle)

'The Nine Months' documents the story of Assam's '**mobile theatre**' companies that tours towns and villages, carrying their own stage equipment, generators and even the auditorium in trucks. After rehearsing for about two months each theatre troupe travels across the state to 70 different locations and perform for 210 nights without any break, every year. This film explores the history, form, style and aesthetics of Assam's mobile theatre. It records the transformation in themes and repertoires in the genre of performance, captures the experience and perspectives of its promoters, directors, actors, technicians, and stagehands and also documents the impact of globalization on its practice. It explores the various kinds of plays staged by the mobile theatre, the issues they deal with and how the genre has transformed from presenting mythological and folk stories to contemporary themes with social and political implications.

Merajur Rehman Baruah is an independent documentary filmmaker based in Delhi. He has a Master's Degree in Sociology, Diploma in Mass Communication from Jamia Millia Islamia and a Film Appreciation Degree from FTII, Pune. He received the Commonwealth Vision Award 2006 for his film *Beyond the Zero Line*.

23.10

Addicted to Acting (Die Spielwütigen/Germany/2004)

(Supported by Goethe Institut)

Director: Andres Veiel (108min Eng. Subtitle)

Stephanie, Karina, Constanze and Prodromos are among the nearly 30 of more than 1,000 applicants a year group who have been admitted to study at the Academy of Dramatic Arts "Ernst Busch" in Berlin. Andres Veiel has accompanied over seven years with the camera, showing her audition for the entrance examination, their successes and failures, talk to them about their dreams and goals and supports them in their first steps in professional life. In his fascinating long-term documentation Andres Veiel tells a story of growing up, stands cons-from finding your own path and overcoming. Gingerly, the camera approaches the faces and captures the difficult to access union, often tiny, but crucial moments of success and failure.

Andres Veiel:

Documentary maker and screenwriter, born in 1959 in Stuttgart, have a degree in psychology at Berlin in 1982. Before graduating, in 1988, he took a directing and dramaturgy course led by the Polish director Krzysztof Kieślowski at the Künstlerhaus Bethanien alongside his university studies. Since 1988, Andres Veiel has worked on his own screenplays, films, plays and theatre productions. He teaches at various film colleges and universities, including the Berlin Free University, the University of Zurich and institutions in Johannesburg and New Delhi. He is a member of the European Film Academy and the German Film Academy and has been honored for his films with numerous national and international awards. 'Die Spielwütigen' has won German Film Critics' Award and Audience Award in 2004 Berlin International Film Festival.

24.10

Natak Jari Hai (India/2005)

(Supported by India Foundation for the Arts)

Dir. Lalit Vachani (84mins, Hindi with English Subtitle)

'*Natak Jari Hai*' a documentary on *Jan Natya Manch* (JANAM), critically explores its history and contemporary practices. Combining archival footage and documentation of contemporary performances, the film especially focuses on the *Nukkad Natak* (street theatre), and its ability to create innovative contexts that facilitate significant involvement on the part of its audience. 'Natak Jari Hai' explores the motivations and ideals of the JANAM actors and their vision of resistance and change as they perform their 'People's Theatre' in diverse parts of India. It brings to life the world of socialist theatre through the words of JANAM's members, and through a reflective portrayal of the group's greatest tragedy - the assassination of its convener, Safdar Hashmi in 1989.

Lalit Vachani is a documentary filmmaker and producer/director of the New Delhi based Wide Eye Film. He studied at St. Stephen's College, Delhi University and at the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania in the US. He was visiting lecturer at the Mass Communication Research Centre, Delhi from 1990-92 and 1996-98 and visiting scholar at the Center for Media, Culture and History at New York University in 1999.

25.10

The Reproduction Crisis (Die Reporduktionskriese/Germany/2007)

(Supported by Goethe Institut)

Directors: Jörg Adolph and Gereon Wetzel (84 min, German, Eng. Subtitle)

An author interviewed people on the subject of fertility and a director rehearses with six actors at Hamburg's Thalia Theater, to make this documentary material come alive on stage. But how much Authentic withstand the director's theater? "The Reproduction Crisis" brings drama work and real people in a fictional dialogue, confronted theater life with authentic life stories, told by the documentary in the theatrical and the theatricality in the documentary. THE REPRODUCTION CRISIS brings stagecraft and real people together in a fictional dialogue. The life of the theater is confronted with authentic life stories. The movie discusses the documental within the theatrical and the theatrical within the documental.

Jörg Adolph: Born in 1967, Jörg Adolph, the Munich-based documentarian has a special fondness for people who devote themselves as possessed of a task and the desire are driven to explore their limits. He is ready to accompany these people with patience, attention and devotion. He has filmed young high performance tennis players: SMALL, FAST AND OUT OF CONTROL 2001 received the German Television Award for "Best Documentary"; he watched the musicians of "The Notwist" in the immense scrupulous work on her album "Neon Golden" in ON / OFF THE RECORD and dipped in CHANNEL SWIMMER with his hero into the treacherous waters of the English Channel. Jörg Adolph avoids everything on which standard documentation would be plunging and focuses on the much margin ere.

Gereon Wetzel: Born in 1972 in Bonn, Gereon studied archeology in Heidelberg University and Documentary Studies at the University of Television and Film in Munich. He Lives and works as a freelance filmmaker, author and lecturer in Munich. Since 2007, he frequently joins Jörg Adolph in making of documentaries.

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